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ABSTRACT

Inherent in the dream of the campus laboratory school were conflicting functions proposed for the school and conflicting perceptions on the part of the human beings involved. Students, supposedly representative, are more often more prosperous or bright or problem-prone than their age group in the general population. Parents, perceiving the school as another private school, often view with doubt or alarm its research and experimentation functions. The dream contemplated no conflict between the demonstration-observation-participation functions and the research-experimentation-inservice functions, but the conflict exists, centered in the differing views of education professors. Instead of combining the roles of master teacher, research partner with professors, and mentor to hordes of visitors, laboratory school teachers usually see themselves fundamentally as good teachers developing experimental innovating programs. Finally, instead of scarcely requiring justification, the laboratory school has had to fight for its life financially at the mercy of budget-cutters in legislatures or in university governance. Meanwhile the public schools have increasingly become the locale for student teaching or extensive research, and innovations in education come from massive projects financed by national government or by foundations. The friends of the laboratory school must build a better school on a reconstructed dream or it will continue to drift toward extinction through internal neglect and external assault. (JS)

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The Laboratory School:

Its Rise And Fall?

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PREFACE

In the classical research tradition, the first step toward the solution of a problem is the careful definition of the problem in context.

The thoughtful and scholarly assessment of the development and present status of laboratory schools contained within these pages gives teacher educators a firm base upon which they may construct new solutions to some old and important problems. Using this contribution prepared and originally delivered by Dr. Van Til in February, 1969, to the national meeting of the Laboratory School Administrators Association in Chicago, we who are most involved and responsible may hope to avoid some of the errors of the past.

Information such as given in this monograph should help us to gain the insights necessary for the creation of new designs for laboratory settings that will be functionally sound and viable as well as enduring facilities for the education of teachers.

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THE DREAM OF THE LABORATORY SCHOOL

What was the vision of the proponents and supporters of the campus laboratory school in twentieth century America? It was a brave dream.

Within a shining new building on the campus of an institution of higher learning, children and youth who were representative of the American population would experience the finest possible education. Their learning experiences would be derived from the application of the tested best already established, and from experimentation with the newest and most venturesome approaches to education.

The laboratory school faculty would be made up of master teachers demonstrating their skills in the art and science of teaching, carrying forward research and experimentation with children and youth, and adroitly inducting observers, participants, and student teachers into the best of all possible educational theory and practice. Their partners in the school would be the college and university professors. The professors would artfully interweave their classroom instruction with extensive observation, participation, and student teaching in the demonstration school by teachers-to-be. The professors also would share in the development of significant research with the experimental school faculty.

To this center of educational enlightenment would journey educators from near and far to observe the best in education. They would then return to their schools to put new ideas into practice, thus raising the level of American education. The laboratory school would be the pride of the college and university administration, the joy of parents fortunate enough to have young people enrolled therein, and the darling of state legislators, boards of trustees, and philanthropists.

It was a brave dream. It was a good dream. What happened to it?

THE CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS

Inherent in the dream were conflicting functions proposed for the laboratory school and conflicting perceptions on the part of human beings who were involved. Let us consider the actors on the stage on which the drama of the laboratory school was played. They included laboratory school students, their parents, the professors in the institutions of higher learning, the laboratory school faculty, the funding sources, and the laboratory school administrators. Let us examine their roles and perceptions.

The Students

Consider first the campus laboratory school student, who, strangely enough, is seldom discussed in the literature concerning the laboratory school. The student is usually "special" rather than "representative." He is admitted by application. He is usually more prosperous or bright or problem-prone than his age group in the American population. Sometimes he has two or even all three of these characteristics.

According to the old proverb, money is the root of all evil. Possibly so. At any rate, the solutions adopted to obtain needed financial support for the campus laboratory school partially accounted for the skew in the distribution of the student body in the typical laboratory school. More plainly, since tuition was charged in many laboratory schools, these laboratory schools were attended by those who could afford to pay tuition. E.I.F. Williams' The Actual and Potential Use of Laboratory Schools, published in 1942 and based on data from 1933-34 and 1937-38 surveys, reported, "in 23.7 percent of the teacher colleges which maintain campus schools, tuition is charged pupils in the schools."[1] But analysis of Evan Hugh Kelley's AACTE publication, College-Controlled Laboratory Schools in the United States--1964 shows that by 1964 45 percent of laboratory schools charged tuition.[2] The thirty-year trend is toward, not away from, tuition. So one skew distorting the classic bell-shaped curve about which we all learned in Psychology I was economic selection.

A second skew in the bell-shaped curve related to the intellectual ability of the members of the student body. The laboratory school was often regarded as particularly appropriate for the bright. Some laboratory schools were designed especially for the gifted. In addition, many environmental factors account for the intellectual headstart often enjoyed by the young people from relatively prosperous families in American life. So the bell-shaped curve as to range of intellectual ability developed a sizeable hump reflecting the gifted and bright members of the

student body. The curve sagged somewhat as to students of "average" or "normal" intellectual ability. The middle group often was less evident in the laboratory school than in a characteristic comprehensive public school.

Less commented upon, but still evident, was another hump, often somewhat smaller than the intellectual hump--those students who, because of a variety of emotional, social, physical, and intellectual factors, were not doing as well as their parents had hoped they would. ("What should we do with George? We've tried the public school and the private academy and the military school. Let's try this new school at the university.") Consequently, so-called problem students were often disproportionately represented in the student body.

Consequently, the bell-shaped curve was often replaced by an outline resembling the camel with a large hump, a sag, and a smaller hump, representing, respectively, high intellectual ability, average characteristics, and problem proneness.

The economic and intellectual and problem skews have contributed to the ambiguity with which laboratory school students have often viewed their school. Laboratory school students frequently enjoy their "special" status and are sometimes fiercely loyal. But they do not want to be so special as to be regarded as "different" (sometimes as snobbish, sometimes as eggheads, sometimes as weird) by their social class contemporaries attending public or private schools in the community.

The dream assumed that the student body would be representative of the American population. But the student body was skewed economically and intellectually and skewed with respect to special problems of the student population. The dream assumed that social pressures would not affect student reactions to the laboratory school. But the students, unable to escape surrounding social pressures, had to contend with outside opinions. Student reactions ranged from strong defense of the laboratory school to requests for more formal grammar in the curriculum.

The Parents

How did the characteristic parents of laboratory school students perceive the laboratory school? Their predominantly upper class or upper-middle class backgrounds were often influential factors in their perceptions. They frequently were sophisticated in their understanding of the interrelationships among social class, attendance at certain educational institutions, and success in life. They wanted the best for their children, and the best included a school better than the run-of-the-mill schools of their communities.

Though inclined to some degree of improvement in the laboratory school program over the conventional school, the parent of a laboratory school youngster often viewed with considerable doubt, and sometimes with alarm, the research and experimentation functions of laboratory schools. He did not want "my child being used as a guinea pig for purposes of educational experimentation." He even viewed with distinct reservation "young teachers in training practicing on my child." The characteristic laboratory school parent learned to keep a cautious weather eye upon his primary goal for his child, entrance into a good college, preferably "the college of his choice." And, especially when writing a substantial check for tuition, it was hard for some parents to see the laboratory school as other than another private school. (There have even been laboratory school teachers and administrators who confused laboratory schools with private schools!)

The dream assumed that the parents would be representative of the American population. Like their children, the parents often were not representative. The dream assumed parental congeniality to experimentation and to the school as a laboratory for future teachers. But parental inclination to innovation was sharply reduced w' en accompanied by upper-income perceptions and especially by the fears surrounding college admission for their loved ones in eras marked by college entrance panics. So parents were often a brake upon some aspects of the dream.

The Professors

And what of the relations of the professors in the sponsoring college or university to the so-called "college-controlled" laboratory school? In some cases, the street on which the laboratory school was located was the widest street in the university world, for it separated the laboratory school from the rest of the university. We can readily understand why that street seemed wide to the liberal arts faculty and to the faculty of certain specialized schools like medicine or engineering within the university. After all, the laboratory school was not "their baby." But sometimes even those who worked in the neighboring building, the school of education, failed to cross the wide street. Yet the laboratory school definitely was "the baby" of the education faculty. Indeed, that may have been part of the trouble.

The initiating force in the creation of the laboratory school was often the education faculty, whether through normal schools, teachers colleges, institutes, state universities, or land grant colleges. Some of the faculty members were particularly active on behalf of establishment of a laboratory school. Many documents were prepared by education faculty members which eloquently pointed out the imperative need in the teacher education enterprise for a laboratory school. Deans of schools of education, or their

equivalents in other forms of teacher education organization, often took many lonely walks to and from meetings concerning the university budget before a laboratory school was authorized by the trustees. So when the baby was born, there was rejoicing and applause in the school of education and, figuratively, dancing in the street that was assumed to connect (not separate) the laboratory school and its parent school, the school of education.

It is generally assumed that the responsibility of parents is to rear their children. But parents do not always agree on child-rearing practices. This is particularly true of individualistic professors when cast in the role of parents of institutions. And there are some parents, too, who abdicate, taking no interest whatever in the child. They have their own concerns. So it was with the professors of education.

In the early twentieth century, the conflict as to functions was less sharp, for the laboratory school was commonly justified as the place for student teaching. But with increased enrollment in teacher education, student teaching moved increasingly away from the campus laboratory schools and into cooperating public schools.

In more recent years, some professors in the schools of education have seen the laboratory school as the locale for trying out their favorite theories or conducting their chosen research. Some have seen the laboratory school as an opportunity for observation and participation by college students. Other professors still saw the laboratory school as the place for student teaching.

But there was a conflict among these functions. A school stressing student teaching, or even a school stressing observation and participation, may not provide a suitable atmosphere for theory development or research. Conversely, a school environment conducive to extensive theory development and research undertakings may not readily accommodate substantial numbers of student teachers, participants, or observers, each intent upon doing his thing, as today's phrase puts it.

The dream contemplated no conflict between the functions of student teaching, participation, and observation, and the functions of professors and laboratory school faculty members carrying through experimental research and theory development. But, in reality, the conflict existed. The supremacy of one or the other of the groups of functions widened the street even further for some among the professors of education. But the greatest miscalculation of all on the part of the professorial fathers was failure to realize that babies soon grow up and reach for and achieve relative independence.

The Laboratory School Teachers

Which brings us to the laboratory school teachers themselves. Laboratory school teachers usually have had no intimacy with the courtship or, indeed, the love affair of the teacher educators out of which the laboratory school was born. They have had no personal experience with the long process of gestation. When laboratory school teachers arrived on the scene, the laboratory school was there. The laboratory school teacher often found himself teaching in a school which, so far as the staff member knew, might have sprung like Minerva full grown from the brow of Zeus. His job? To teach well.

Basically, the commitment of the laboratory school teacher is to good teaching. His major responsibility is for the development of a group of young human beings. As a good teacher, his loyalties are to his students. His other responsibilities seem to him subordinate (though often overwhelming) expectancies. V.L. Replogle and J.W. Carrington have described such expectancies dramatically in the 1955 Association for Student Teaching Yearbook, Functions of Laboratory Schools in Teacher Education. They point out that "the supervising teacher is caught in innumerable squeeze plays. He feels responsibility for so many things and to so many individuals. He needs to be here when he should be there. He must miss this committee meeting so he can attend that one. He needs to have a conference with his pupil, his student teacher, the college instructor, and perhaps a parent who came in unexpectedly. Oh, yes, thirty observers tomorrow at ten! When can I find time to do the research necessary to improve our school curriculum, i.e. social studies, ad infinitum? I need more teaching time. How can I find time to keep a cumulative record for both pupils and student teachers? There are so many things to be done and so little time to do them. How did Stephen Leacock ever jump on that horse and ride off in all directions? I must talk at tonight's P.T.A. meeting."[3]

The laboratory school teacher learns that he should carry on research based on his work with the students. But often he is having enough problems attending graduate classes and working for his advanced degrees, enabling him to leave the laboratory school and become an "educational leader." He learns that he should enter into research partnerships with the professors. But often he is having enough difficulty meeting their professorial requirements in their classes which he attends. Moreover, they do not always seem to be interested in what interests him; and he prizes his freedom to teach, his freedom to use his own style and approaches. He usually wants to be not only a good teacher but also an experimental and innovating teacher. However, this latter role does not seem to him to necessarily involve research. He knows that the school is a place for him to help student teachers, participants, and observers. But he welcomes outsiders most when they can help him do a good job with his students.

It is a rare laboratory school teacher who has not had his occasional heretical doubts about the wisdom of parents or the practicality of professors of education. Most laboratory school teachers have had their moments when they mistrust the parental upbringing of some of the students in their classes. Occasionally, they have even suspected that the professors of education would be quite baffled if confronted by real live children or adolescents, especially the laboratory school teacher's own classes.

The dream assumed that the laboratory school teacher could combine the roles of master teacher, research partner with professors, and mentor to hordes of visitors. The reality is that, of all these roles, the laboratory school teacher sees himself fundamentally as a good teacher who is developing experimental innovating programs.

Consequently, when a statement of functions of the laboratory school is drawn up, the laboratory school teacher places high, usually first, the provision of an outstanding educational program for the children and youth who attend the school. The provision defends his perception of his role.

Just as it seems hard for many professors of education to cross the street, the laboratory school teacher recognizes early that it is hard for a laboratory school teacher to achieve full first-class citizenship in the university world of scholars. It often seems to him that others are authorized to go to the important out-of-town meetings, that university decisions are made without his participation, and that, in general, he is tolerated as a second-class citizen of the university rather than fully accepted.

As A.R. Mead puts it in Functions of Laboratory Schools in Teacher Education, "By and large, what has been done to these workers and about them has been a shame and disgrace to the profession. They have been paid smaller salaries, asked to achieve the same standards of preparation as other college staff members, not allowed to have faculty rank in many cases, not allowed to share in faculty deliberations in most cases, sometimes sneered at by persons who should know better, and often 'encouraged' by their 'superior' administrators to 'get out of the laboratory school and teach courses in education!'"[4]

The Funding Sources

And what about the sources relating to funding, aside from the tuition-paying parent already described? How do legislatures, boards of trustees, and university administrators see the laboratory school? These fund-related sources have the ungrateful task of trying to make a judgment as to the relative value of each

aspect of sizeable college or university operations. Even more difficult, the fund-related agencies must translate their judgment into dollars and cents.

When the laboratory school is justified to them through pleas for support, it is in terms of the student teaching-participation-observation functions and the research-experimentation functions. There is no dean in recorded history who ever attempted to justify a laboratory school to the funding sources as an institution affording employment to deserving elementary and secondary teachers. Should other sources of information persuade the funding agencies that the school is simply a good private school, or that few any longer cross the wide street, or that little comes from the school by way of research or publication, the fount of funding is apt to dry up. Since money is by the economists' definition a scarce commodity, it does not take too much persuasion to convince funding sources that the laboratory school is "a fad and a frill," nice to have but hardly necessary.

The dream assumed that the laboratory school would be so bright a lighthouse in the watery wastes of education as to scarcely require justification. But the reality has been that the laboratory school has had to fight for its life financially. Sometimes funds were not cut off, yet little more than maintenance was provided. As a result, in some schools financial malnutrition developed, resulting in virtual death without proper burial.

The Burden of Multiple Purposes and Variant Perceptions

It is little wonder that in a situation of conflicting functions and variant perceptions, laboratory schools struggled to achieve identity. Occasionally, by careful delimitation, clarity of leadership, and favorable surrounding circumstances, a laboratory school became preeminent in its time. Examples cited always included the famous Laboratory School of the University of Chicago at the turn of the century under the leadership of John Dewey. To cite others in this paper would lead to controversy among my listeners or readers and divert their attention from the burden of my address. Suffice it to say that I have my little list of laboratory schools that were or are outstanding--and so do you.

But the burden of multiple purposes and variant perceptions was heavy for many laboratory schools. Some settled for being all things to all men. To borrow from the language of sociology, the laboratory schools often "accommodated." Genuine experimentation in the students' programs was accompanied by the persistence of the study of Latin and of formal grammar in the curriculum. Parents sanctioned some experimental work and a high degree of teacher-in-training activities through an unspoken trade for

assurances that the student would be qualified for the college of his choice. The doors were opened to student teachers, participants, and observers. Somewhat more uncertainly, the researchers were assured that they too would be welcome, should they desire to come in and if they promised not to get in the way of "good teaching." Laboratory school teachers were occasionally reminded of their broader roles while essentially remaining undisturbed in their comfortable and accustomed roles as good teachers. Funding sources were constantly assured of the significant contribution to teacher education of the laboratory school while public relations attempts were made to discredit whispers, valid and invalid, which questioned the school's contribution.

The Laboratory School Administrators

A few laboratory school administrators became giants in the teacher education profession. They managed to combine skillful and successful administration and supervision of their school with carrying on their own independent research, writing their books on education, serving as consultants to school systems, delivering addresses at national conventions, etc. Eventually, they retired to schools of education where, presumably, their benign wisdom was respected by all. But the number of such laboratory school super-administrators has never been legion.

Some laboratory school administrators (and there are those who would say most) found that their time and energy had to be fully committed to acting as mediators or brokers among the conflicting functions and the variant perceptions of groups. Their professional life was a constant shuffling among daily and differing demands of students, parents, professors, college and university officials, laboratory school teachers, and funding sources. Their role was that of the man in the middle. They were the eternal reconcilers. They often responded with accommodation. Even so, they sometimes found that nobody really loved them--except, possibly, their families and their dogs.

TRENDS AFFECTING LABORATORY SCHOOLS

So throughout the twentieth century, laboratory schools have been a part of teacher education. They have been born. And some have died. New ones have been born. Sometimes they have reached heights of eminence; sometimes they have simply endured.

Meanwhile, education continued to change. Two contemporary trends have particular significance for the laboratory school. Increasingly, the public schools are the locale of student teaching

or extensive research. Increasingly, the innovations in education come from massive projects financed by national government or by foundations. Decreasingly do the significant innovations come from the laboratory school.

The Decline of Student Teaching in Laboratory Schools

We had best bear in mind that student teaching as a laboratory school function is in decline but is far from disappearing. Kelley reported in College Controlled Laboratory Schools in the United States--1964 as follows:

> Respondents from 186 institutions provided information regarding the relative importance of the seven possible laboratory schools functions listed on the survey questionnaire. For the total group the functions were ranked in the following order of importance:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | First | -Observation |
> | Second | -Demonstration |
> | Third | -Student Teaching |
> | Fourth | -Participation |
> | Fifth | -Experimentation |
> | Sixth | -Research |
> | Seventh | -In-Service Training |
>
> In spite of the attention which has been given to the importance of research and experimentation as unique functions of laboratory schools, only twenty-seven (27) institutions listed either of these two functions as of first importance in their schools. On the other hand, sixty-two (62) institutions reported that student teaching is the most important teacher education function of their laboratory school.[5]

As late as 1958, Duance E. Lang reported in Educational Administration and Supervision[6] that his study of 75 laboratory schools indicated the majority of laboratory school principals queried (70.7%) still regarded student teaching as the school's primary function. Demonstration and observation was regarded as a dual primary responsibility by almost half of the principals. Experimentation as a primary function was of little importance and as a secondary function had wide surface support but small actual application.

In 1959 Otto Hughes reported in the Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University, in a study of 31 laboratory schools, that the major roles were (in order) student teaching, research and experimentation, observation and participation, and demonstration.[7]

So the decline, rather than disappearance, of the once primary function, student teaching, can be documented. The decline in student teaching in laboratory schools is readily understandable. It grew out of such social forces as the growth in population and the consequent sharp increase in the number of teachers required. It also grew from a decision by many educators when confronted with the dilemma of whether to educate teachers in training as to "the best" or as to "the most real." Presumably the laboratory school was "the best." But, given a student body skewed to upper income, brightness and problem proneness, given what appeared to many visitors from the public schools to be easy access to materials and resources, given proportionately more staff members to work with students, and given sometimes differing curriculum organization or administrative methods, the laboratory school was not perceived as "the most real." So many educators chose the "reality" of the public school system as the better experience for potential teachers.

With the onerous responsibility of providing for student teaching reduced, laboratory schools should have been more free to stress their functions of demonstration, good teaching, observation, participation, experimentation, and research. However, some inhibiting factors described earlier in the description of conflicting functions and variant perceptions remained.

As James B. Jackson pointed out in the Journal of Teacher Education in 1967, the cluster of functions comprising observation, participation and the remaining student teaching was given more emphasis than the cluster of functions including research, experimentation, and in-service education. Jackson attributes this to students and professors being more involved in the former cluster, the difficulties in achieving the latter cluster, the objections of parents to guinea pig roles for students, and the fact that laboratory school staff members are busy enough with pre-service education.[8]

A.R. Gaskill and A.A. Carlson pointed out in "Is the Campus Laboratory School Obsolescent?" that the laboratory school could not do well with all of the mutually exclusive objectives and that present demands consequently exceeded present facilities and abilities.[9] John F. Ohles in "The Laboratory School: Unsolved Problem" showed that integration of laboratory experiences with college instruction was difficult for both laboratory school and college staffs because of the amount of teacher load and lack of time, failure on both sides to understand the roles of the other, status problems, and lack of contact between staffs.[10]

The Growth of Innovation Outside the Laboratory Schools

A major difficulty in the full use of laboratory schools for the cluster of demonstration-observation-participation functions and for the cluster of research-experimentation-in-service functions developed in the 1950's. Fashions in ideas changed in a changing social context.

A shift came in American education away from the progressive education conceptions and toward the reformation of the separate subject disciplines. The background need not be retold here; it has been well described by Lawrence Cremin in The Transformation of the Schools.[11] To put it fliply, Jerome Bruner replaced John Dewey as the patron saint of post-Sputnik American educators. But the better laboratory schools from the 1930's into the 1950's had been examples of such progressive education developments as core and block-time programs, the solving of cross-disciplinary problems, creative writing, social travel, application of findings of child and youth development studies, etc.

The sponsors of massive government projects in the separate subject disciplines were funded by the national government after the 1957 Sputnik panic. The national projects picked up the ball of innovation and ran with it. Foundations, notably Ford, developed and supported new ways of organization--notably team teaching, nongraded classrooms, new school plant designs focusing on resource centers, etc. A new technology industry developed which attempted to apply the industrial revolution to education via educational TV, programmed learning, computer-aided instruction, and a variety of multi-media.

The so-called reform movement in education of the 1950's and early 1960's stemmed from other sources than the schools of education. Even more germane for our purposes in this appraisal of the laboratory school is the fact that the new curriculum reform movement of the late 1950's and the 1960's did not stem from the laboratory schools, even though the laboratory school had been conceived, by the dream of the potential contribution of the laboratory school, as a major focus (if not the focus) for experimentation and innovation in education. Not only did laboratory schools not create the new innovations--by the late 1960's many laboratory schools, handicapped by old facilities, lack of funds for expansion, and conflicting expectations, had been unable to adopt the recent innovations. Some educators stuck to their philosophical and curricular guns and refused to accept the assumption that progressive education was obsolete. The price paid for such integrity included lack of access to governmental and foundation funding. Certain foundation-selected and national government-favored public school systems came to be looked on as the contemporary educational lighthouses. Who among us, for instance, has not heard of the programs of the schools of Lexington, Massachusetts, or of Melbourne, Florida?

In such a situation, a further shift in social priorities sometimes restores a social institution to a leadership role. But when a further shift in social priorities as to education occurred, it went in the direction of emphasis on the culturally disadvantaged. True, this shift returned to respectability many beliefs of progressive educators, though phrased in new language. But, in warring on poverty, American society necessarily focused upon the Negro masses, the urban poor, and the deprived minorities. Unfortunately for the laboratory schools, an attack on poverty was exactly the offense which most laboratory schools were least equipped to mount. However, a lucky minority of laboratory schools had become, at some time in their histories, school districts drawing their student bodies from the local neighborhood. Some among this minority among laboratory schools were so fortunate (fortunate at least as to the possibility of receiving national government or foundation support) as to be located in a poverty area and/or a black community. But most laboratory schools were not attended by the poor or the black though their student bodies were stippled by upward-aspiring recipients of scholarships who lent variety and even sometimes a touch of color to the student body.

So, in the late 1960's, as reconstruction of separate subject disciplines persists (though slowing down), as technology booms, and as the problem of urban areas and black dissent approaches crisis, the stage is set for action by the natural enemies of the laboratory school.

The Natural Enemies

The concept of natural enemies is a familiar one in the animal world. The dog and the cat, for instance, provide a homely illustration of natural enemies. The laboratory school, too, has had its natural enemies, however, benign their appearance--for instance, the laboratory school student who rejects the education he received, the parent perceiving the school as another private school, the professor of education indifferent to the laboratory school, the budget-cutter in the legislature or in university governance hunting for cost reductions and lowered taxes. Strangely enough, the laboratory school sometimes has natural enemies within its own building--the laboratory school administrator who always accommodates and never leads, and the narrowly focused laboratory school teacher who rejects all functions save teaching.

To these natural enemies of the laboratory school still another has been added in our times. With the development of projects and research financed by national government and foundations and with the shift in curricular innovation to the public schools, a new type of professor and administrator in teacher education has come to the fore. The new-type educator is committed to research in his own study or in university libraries. His laboratories are the school systems of the land. The new professors assiduously seek funds from governments, foundations, and university sources. Proponents of the laboratory school must face the unpleasant fact that many among the new type of professor and administrator in teacher education genuinely believe the laboratory school to be obsolete, passé, a dead duck. Many sincerely believe that funds now expended for laboratory schools would be better invested in their own research and projects.

I know of no scholarly study of the termination of laboratory schools by some colleges and universities in America. But I venture as a hypothesis that when such studies of termination--the correct diplomatic expression used is "phasing out"--are made, a rising new type of professor and administrator in teacher education will prove to have been one of the most effective natural enemies of the laboratory school. Caesar, you will recall, was put to death by his colleagues, who included the noble Brutus.

The Natural Friends

If the laboratory school has natural enemies, who are its natural friends? They should include those community influentials who were pleased with their own education in the laboratory schools. They should include the parents who want their children to have better education than that which the conventional school can supply, and believe that the laboratory schools provide such education. They should include the professors of education who do continue to cross the street with their students and their research programs. They should include the statesmen among legislators. And, of course, the natural friends of the laboratory school should include its broad-visioned teachers and its leadership-oriented administrators. The latter should be the best and most active friends of the laboratory schools, for the work of such schools is their professional commitment, their professional life.

One would think that such friends of the laboratory school would be thoughtfully engaged in reexamining the dream of the laboratory school and in realistically redefining and adapting the functions and purposes of each individual laboratory school to contemporary realities. One would think that such friends of the

laboratory school would be engaged in radical and searching study and action to achieve a student body at least representative of America, and possibly stressing the handicapped Americans, rather than an elite. One would think the friends of the laboratory school would be clarifying relationships and actively fostering cooperation between school of education staff members and laboratory school staff members. One would think that the friends of the laboratory school would be urgently demanding the funds and staff to exemplify in the laboratory school the best possible education for children and youth. One would think the friends of the laboratory school would be identifying the appropriate frontiers for the laboratory school today. For instance, in a world of disproportionate emphasis on temporarily favored subjects, one would think the friends of the laboratory school would create balanced programs which adapt the projects and innovations to a progressive philosophy.

But I doubt that many friends of the laboratory schools are so engaged on behalf of the laboratory school. Even many teachers and administrators of laboratory schools do not seem to be so engaged. Possibly historians of the year 2000 may record that the laboratory school was not killed but that its friends yielded to the death wish and committed suicide without putting up a fight for life. Or will they attribute the fall of the laboratory school to blindness?

But let us hope instead that the historians of the year 2000 will chronicle the laboratory school as a flourishing and healthy part of the developing teacher education. Let us hope that some version of the dream, reexamined and redefined through reconstuction of experience, may yet prevail.

A Time for Choice

The choice seems clear. The friends of the laboratory school will either learn from the past and build a better laboratory school for the late twentieth century based on a reconstructed dream, or the friends of the laboratory school will carry on business as usual as the laboratory school, marked by conflicting purposes and varying perceptions, drifts toward extinction through internal neglect and external assault.

FOOTNOTES

[1]E.I.F. Williams, The Actual and Potential Use of Laboratory Schools (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1942), p. 218.

[2]Evan Hugh Kelley, College-Controlled Laboratory Schools in the United States--1964 (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1964).

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